

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:JKBISHOP:BDF

APPROVED BY P:DNEWSOM

NEA:HHSAUNDERS

DIA:PPAPAS

L/NEA:DSMALL (INFO)

S/S-0 RCASTRODALE

-----052373 091732Z /72

P 091721Z MAY 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 117714

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PEPR, MO, MR, AG, FR, SP, SS

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S MEETING WITH MOROCCAN
AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN

REF: STATE 103687

1. SUMMARY: DURING MAY 3 MEETING, NEWSOM INFORMED
BENGELLOUN THAT ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES IT IS OBLIGATED TO
INFORM CONGRESS THERE HAS BEEN TECHNICAL VIOLATION OF
BILATERAL ARMS ACCORD AND WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO TELL
CONGRESS AT THAT TIME THAT MOROCCO HAD AGREED TO WITHDRAW

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F-5'S FROM MAURITANIA AND THE SAHARA. BENGELLOUN SAID HE
WOULD REPORT NEWSOM'S VIEWS TO RABAT. EMBASSY INSTRUCTED
TO MAKE SAME POINTS IN CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR
MOROCCAN OFFICIALS. BENGELLOUN CLAIMED 950 RUSSIANS AND
UNSTATED NUMBER OF CUBAN "TECHNICIANS" ARE HELPING
POLISARIO. BENGELLOUN ALSO STATED AS FAR AS HE IS AWARE
HASSAN HAS NOT CANCELLED PLANS TO ATTEND UN DISARMAMENT

CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. SAHARA: RESPONDING TO NEWSOM'S INVITATION TO OUTLINE EVOLUTION OF SAHARA SITUATION SINCE 1974, BENGELLOUN MADE PRESENTATION IN WHICH ONLY NEW ELEMENTS WERE BENGELLOUN'S CLAIMS THAT ALGERIANS HAD MOUNTED TWO UNSUCCESSFUL COUP ATTEMPTS AGAINST OULD DADDAH AND THAT CUBAN "TECHNICIANS" AND AS MANY AS 950 "RUSSIANS FROM LITHUANIA" ARE AIDING POLISARIO. HE DID NOT ELABORATE ON THESE STATEMENTS, OTHER THAN TO MENTION THAT PENTAGON IS AWARE OF RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES. (DIA HAS NO INFORMATION ON EITHER SOVIET OR CUBAN DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO POLISARIO.)

3. TURNING DISCUSSION TO MOROCCAN USE OF AMERICAN ARMS, NEWSOM DESCRIBED SENSITIVITY OF ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS TO USE OF AMERICAN ARMS BY MILITARY ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS. REMINDING BENGELLOUN OF SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION ON THIS TOPIC WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUCETTA, NEWSOM SAID U.S. UNDERSTANDS SOME MOROCCAN F-5'S WERE IN MAURITANIA AS RECENTLY AS END OF APRIL. WHATEVER VIEWS MOROCCO MIGHT HAVE ON SAHARA, MAURITANIA CLEARLY A SEPARATE COUNTRY, NEWSOM SAID.

4. CONTINUING, NEWSOM EXPLAINED IT SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO SAY DIFFICULT THINGS TO FRIENDS FOR GOOD REASONS IN INTERESTS OF STRENGTHENING RELATIONS. TO RESPECT RESPON-
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SIBILITIES STEMMING FROM U.S. LEGISLATION, AND TO BE CONSISTENT WITH ACTION TAKEN IN SIMILAR CASES, ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE TO NOTIFY CONGRESS AT SOME POINT THAT THERE HAS BEEN A TECHNICAL VIOLATION OF U.S.-MOROCCAN ARMS AGREEMENT. AT THAT TIME, NEWSOM SAID, IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL TO BE ABLE TO REPORT TO CONGRESS THAT GOM HAD STATED F-5'S WOULD BE RETURNED TO MOROCCO. NOTING THAT AT ANY TIME CONGRESS COULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN RAISING THIS ISSUE, NEWSOM SAID ADMINISTRATION WOULD PREFER TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE ITSELF.

5. STATING HIS PERSONAL IGNORANCE OF THE LOCATION OF MOROCCAN F-5'S, BENGELLOUN SAID HE WOULD REPORT NEWSOM'S VIEWS TO RABAT. NEWSOM EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO REGULARIZE SITUATION BY BRINGING MOROCCAN USE OF F-5'S INTO CONFORMITY WITH U.S. INTERPRETATION OF BILATERAL ARMS AGREEMENT BY THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM BOTH MAURITANIA AND THE SAHARA. HE SAID SUCH ACTION WOULD NOT PRECLUDE POSSIBLE U.S. RE-EXAMINATION OF MOROCCO'S DESIRE TO RECEIVE AUTHORIZATION TO USE U.S.-FURNISHED EQUIPMENT IN THESE AREAS.

6. HASSAN VISIT: BENGELLOUN SAID HE HAS RECEIVED NO

NOTICE THAT KING HAS CANCELLED PLANS TO ATTEND DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT WILL BE UNABLE TO RECEIVE HIM IN WASHINGTON. HE EXPLAINED THAT KING HAD HOPED TO MEET WHILE IN U.S. WITH GISCARD D'ESTAING, SADAT, AND PRINCE FAHD, AS WELL AS PRESIDENT. IN RESPONSE TO BENGELLOUN'S SUGGESTION THAT KING STILL MIGHT BE ABLE TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT IN NEW YORK, NEWSOM INFORMED HIM THAT

ELEVEN HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT AND 44 FOREIGN MINISTERS ARE EXPECTED IN THE U.S. BETWEEN MAY 23 AND JUNE 9. DUE TO HIS CROWDED SCHEDULE, PRESIDENT HAD BEEN FORCED TO MAKE NUMEROUS DIFFICULT DECISIONS AND OTHER EQUALLY CLOSE FRIENDS OF THE U.S. HAD BEEN INFORMED PRESIDENT COULD NOT RECEIVE THEM. WHEN BENGELLOUN ASKED
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WHEN IT MIGHT SUBSEQUENTLY BE POSSIBLE TO FIX A DATE FOR HASSAN'S VISIT, NEWSOM EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT WILL BE ENGAGED IN CAMPAIGN DURING SUMMER MONTHS AND IN FOREIGN TRAVEL. NEWSOM SUGGESTED HE AND BENGELLOUN RESUME DISCUSSION ON POSSIBLE VISIT AFTER FORTHCOMING BUSY PERIOD CONCLUDES IN MID-JUNE.

7. WHILE BEING ESCORTED TO HIS CAR, BENGELLOUN ASKED VELIOTES IF HE COULD GIVE "ASSURANCES" REGARDING F-5'S. VELIOTES REPLIED THAT WHAT WAS REQUIRED WERE GOM ASSURANCES, WHICH COULD BE CONVEYED, OF COURSE, BY AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN.

8. FOR RABAT: TAKING YOUR CUE FROM NEWSOM'S DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT WITH BENGELLOUN, AMBASSADOR SHOULD FIND EARLY OCCASION AGAIN TO DISCUSS SUBJECT OF WITHDRAWAL OF F-5'S FROM MAURITANIA AND SAHARA WITH FOREIGN MINISTER. AS YOU CAN APPRECIATE, SHOULD WE BE FORCED TO SEND LETTER OF VIOLATION TO CONGRESS WITHOUT HAVING ASSURANCES RE WITHDRAWAL OF F-5'S, THERE WOULD BE CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR RESTRICTIONS RE OUR REGULAR MILITARY SALES PROGRAMS FOR MOROCCO. WE LEAVE IT TO YOUR DISCRETION WHETHER OR NOT TO INTRODUCE THIS PARTICULAR UNPLEASANT THOUGHT EXPLICITLY INTO YOUR DISCUSSIONS. NEWSOM MADE POINT IN CONTEXT OF HIS DISCUSSION WITH BENGELLOUN WHO, WE HOPE, RECEIVED AND TRANSMITTED THIS MESSAGE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE117714
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JKBISHOP:BDF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780196-0742
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780578/aaaacods.tel
Line Count: 164
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: c40ab1a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 103687
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2746224
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S MEETING WITH MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN
TAGS: MASS, PEPR, MO, MR, AG, FR, SP, SS, (NEWSOM, DAVID D), (HASSAN II), (BENGELLOUN, ALI)
To: RABAT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c40ab1a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014